

Boise District (BD) Resource Advisory Council (RAC)

Boise District Office

3948 Development Avenue. Boise, ID 83705

Thursday September 13, 2012

9:00 a.m. ~ 2:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Boise District (BD) Council Members Present:

Gene Gray, Dr. Ted Hoffman, Brenda Richards, Bill Walsh, Donna Bennett, Stacey Baczkowski, Rick Just, Ralph Richardson, Karen Steenhof, Gayle Poorman, Sara Braasch Schmidt, Dr. Neil Rimbey, Kathryn Alder and Richard Raymondi

Boise District Members Absent: Ted Howard

BLM Advisory Present:

Meagan Conry, Boise District (BD) Acting District Manager, Marsha Buchanan, BD-RAC Coordinator.

Other BLM Staff Present: Arnie Pike, Bruneau Field (BFO) Manager; Tricia Roller, Four Rivers Field Office (FRFO); Michelle McDaniel, Owyhee Field Office (OFO); Andy Delmas, BD Fire Management Officer; Jake Vialpondo, Special Projects Manager OFO.

Guests Present: Dave Franzen, Intermountain Rangeland Consultants, Mike Roach, Jessica Howard, Bob Howard, Steve Damele

Welcome: Gene Gray, Chairman opened the meeting 9:00 a.m. Gene welcomed everyone.

All RAC members as well as BLM staff members introduced themselves, and all guests were thanked for coming.

Minutes: The Minutes from the June 2012 meeting were unavailable.

Approval of agenda items: The agenda was approved.

Discussion of Action Items: Action items from the June 2012 meeting included:

- Gene Gray will forward the Governor's Sage-Grouse Task Force's recommendations to M.J. for her to email to the RAC as soon as he gets the "Green Light". (Completed on 06-18-12.)
- M.J. will work with Brenda to get the RAC's draft letter of support for the Governor's task force and email it to RAC members for comments and edits. She will incorporate comments and edits, Gene Gray will sign final and it will be mailed to Governor. (status unknown)
- M.J. will contact Grant Simons to contact Greg Simons, author of the Adaptive Management Plan, in regards to a future meeting (status unknown)
- Terry will discuss CWMA with Lonnie and BLM will determine if there are additional ways to work with counties and weed control, M.J. and Arnie will compile contract information to determine what options BLM has when working with counties for weed control. (incomplete)
- M.J. will send electronic version of sage grouse habitat maps to RAC members – (Completed on 06-15-12.)
- Terry H. will provide information about bank barbs to RAC members. (incomplete)
- M.J. will provide twitter contact information to RAC members, as well as contact information for NIFC updates. (complete)
- M.J. will email RAC members and solicit feedback for upcoming July and September tours. (complete)

Hot Topics: Meagan Conry, Welcomed everyone to the meeting. Boise District managers and staff have been very busy with a number of multiple use issues since the last RAC Meeting. Meagan discussed the following topics:

- The District is completing the planning for a proposed wild horse gather in the Owyhee Field Office later this year. At this time funding is not guaranteed and holding sites are limited.
- The BLM AND RFPA joint suppression efforts are working well.
- Update on the Warm Springs Fire area – the combination of herbicide and goats seem to provide positive results.
- District staff have completed 11 emergency rehabilitation and stabilization plans. Work should begin this fall.
- Jim Fincher, the newly appointed Boise District Manager will be arriving on September 24.

Guest: Steve Damele shared a memo to the RAC from the Howard Ranch.

Dr. Neil Rimbey, Paradigm Update

Neil introduced the four area ranchers present working with his group on the Paradigm Project including; Steve Damele, Bob Howard, Jessica Howard, and Dr. Ted Hoffman. Also attending was Dave Franzen, Intermountain Rangeland Consultants, who is monitoring the grazing

demonstration areas for changes in vegetation and fuel loads.

The discussion included using grazing for the reduction of fire loads and invasive species.

During and following the Paradigm Presentation the RAC members engaged in a lengthy conversation about not only this project, but fuel load and invasive species district wide. The following topics were included in the conversation:

- Bob Howard – Grazing is necessary to minimize fuel loads and ranchers need the help of BLM to ‘get this going’. Bob also asked what is the role of the RAC?
- Gene Gray – Question for the group as a whole – What can the RAC do the effect this?
- Donna Bennett – Suggested judicial decisions were crucial to solve the issue.
- Dr. Hoffman – The BLM is not trying to get by it, the BLM needs to reduce fuels and in the last 18 years no action has been completed and the BLM is “not following law or instructions”. He suggested RAC members read the Fuel Treatments on Rangelands report written by the PAG Policy Analysis Group (PAG). Dr. Hoffman also stated the range is disappearing and the public won’t stand for it, moreover a huge amount of income can be found.
- Kathryn Alder – Questioned the role of states’ rights.
- Brenda Richards – Reiterated these are multiple use issues, further stating when range is gone all users suffer, and current management lacks common sense.
- Steve Damele – Stated the RAC could ask if county commissioners have land use plans, if counties have a plan they should approach BLM. Steve also mentioned changing applicable laws would allow BLM management flexibility.
- Bob Howard – Suggested the BLM should be more aggressive, including going to litigation if needed. He mentioned in his conversations with BLM national office staff he received feedback that did not coincide with local management.
- Rick Just – Suggested a group of 3 or 4 need to meeting with Secretary Salazar to promote change. He stressed the need to make this issue ‘front page’ news if we want action.
- Dr. Neil Rimbey – Mentioned a discussion he had with Bob Bolton of BLM including; 1) Designate some local areas as experimental, 2) start the NEPA process now.
- Dr. Ted Hoffman – We are in drought conditions in the West, it is a fact of life. He fears that current management is doing more harm than good and no native species will be left. He stated that fuels reduction will not happen until fire becomes a legal liability for BLM.
- Gene Gray – Gene wrapped up the conversation by asking each member of the RAC to send him an email with their opinion on solutions to this issue.

BREAK:

Field Reports:

Field Offices provided updates.

Field Trip Reports:

Donna and Karen briefly spoke about the upcoming Bruneau area field trip to view work done by the USAF. Neil commended Donna and Karen for their work with this. The next field trip is September 17, 2012.

Fire Reports:

Andy Delmas provided an overview of wildland fire in the District. Neil commended Andy and the District Fire group on their work with the IDOT and IRRC on the development and implementation of signs at rest areas to notify the public of fire danger.

Public Comments:

None

Gateway Project:

Tricia Roller spoke with the RAC members, providing an update on the Gateway project. Tricia also provided large maps to show the proposed project routes. The RAC made a determination to send a letter to Secretary Salazar (cc Governor Otter, County Commissioners, Congressional representatives and the press) regarding the project. The letter will be written by Karen, Kathy, and Brenda and will be forwarded to RAC members prior to finalizing.

Ted made the motion to finalize the decision to write the letter, with was seconded by Kathy. The motion carried with 100% agreement. The members noted this letter should be completed as soon as possible, preferably prior to the release of the EIS.

Lunch

Jake Vialpondo, Owyhee 68 Permit Renewal Status:

Jake shared a presentation of the status of the renewal of the Owyhee grazing permits.

Review of Action Items from Meeting:

- Marsha will distribute information regarding BLM NLCS management. (Complete)
- Gene asked Kathryn Alder to research her question about sagebrush and ozone.

- Marsha will distribute the PAG (Policy Analysis Group) report (Fuel Treatments on Rangeland”). (Complete)
- Gene asked all RAC members to send him an email with their thoughts on what the RAC’s role is.
- The RAC will send a letter to Secretary Salazar et al, with recommendations for the Gateway project and expressing concerns on the current proposed project routing. The letter will be written by Karen, Kathy, and Brenda and will be forwarded to RAC members prior to finalizing. This letter will be completed as soon as possible, preferably prior to the release of the EIS.

Identify date for next RAC meeting:

Next Meeting date set for November 29, 2012, time and place to be announced.

Meeting Adjourned: 2:12 on September 13, 2012

Marsha Buchanan
Boise District
Note taker

Minutes Certified by:

 Gene Gray
 BDO RAC Chairperson

 Date

 Meagan M. Conry
 Designated Federal Official (Acting)

 Date

LIST OF HANDOUTS

1. Fuel Treatments on Rangelands
2. Field Reports

